

Old Cotton and Bag Mill Becomes Cornerstone of Development

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

An ambitious public-private partnership in the Atlanta EZ is converting a 100-year-old cotton and bag mill into a mixed-use development that includes what may be the largest loft development in the country. The Fulton Cotton and Bag Mill is a three-phase, 15-acre, \$35 million project to produce 510 loft apartments, 160,000 square feet of office space, and 13,250 square feet of retail space in the disinvested Cabbagetown neighborhood.

“Not only are we converting a deteriorating eyesore into modern, affordable apartments, we are also creating [more than] 500 construction-related jobs and making significant reductions in crime,” comments Ron Diamond, Economic Development Manager for the Atlanta EZ.

The Atlanta EZ Corporation (AEZC) provided a \$1 million loan as seed money for the project. In exchange, the developer made the commitment to price 40 percent of the units for low- to moderate-income families and to make its best effort to recruit EZ residents for construction jobs. The project has been the impetus for major commercial and residential revitalization in the Cabbagetown neighborhood and other communities adjacent to it.

Phase One of the project has been completed and all 83 available loft apartments have been leased. Plans include converting some of the lofts into condominiums to bring more homeownership into the area.

For more information contact Ron Diamond, Economic Development Manager, AEZC, at 404-853-7611.

Atlanta OSCS Exceeds Goals for Service and Assistance

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

The Atlanta One-Stop Capital Shop (AOSCS) celebrated its second anniversary in February and is well on its way to fulfilling its mission of leveraging public and private resources and providing centralized and comprehensive technical assistance to Atlanta's emerging and expanding small businesses. Client volumes have far exceeded expectations. The original program design called for serving five clients daily and making two loans a month. AOSCS currently averages 40 clients per day. Volume is projected to almost double this year due to a number of new initiatives and more intensive outreach efforts.

Since AOSCS opened its doors, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) reports that 105 loans have been made within the Atlanta EZ, resulting in more than \$28 million in new investment through SBA alone. AOSCS offers a convenient and resourceful way to collect information about starting or operating a business. "EZ residents can access our services, use our computer lab, and work with a business counselor all under one roof," says Joseph R. Reid, Executive Director of the Atlanta EZ Corporation.

From a population of nearly 50,000 residents, the Atlanta EZ Corporation has calculated that 5,000 individuals are potential entrepreneurs interested in starting or expanding business ventures. AOSCS is currently serving 60 to 80 percent of the Atlanta EZ's total entrepreneurial market. AOSCS and SBA staff spend most of their time working with EZ businesses and potential entrepreneurs, implementing special initiatives, and fielding inquiries about locating existing or potential businesses within the EZ.

AOSCS has awarded 52 technical assistance grants to EZ businesses ranging from \$250 to \$2,000 for services such as store layout and design and for hiring EZ professionals to provide legal and business services. "The Atlanta One-Stop Capital Shop is an excellent resource for EZ residents who are interested in making their dreams of opening a business a reality," concludes Mr. Reid.

Plans include development of a microloan program—the "Buy Atlanta Campaign"—and organizing a Chamber of Neighborhood Commerce.

For more information contact Amy Triandiflou, Assistant to the Executive Director, Atlanta EZ Corporation, at 404-853-7370.

Residents Trained To Paint Houses and Remove Asbestos Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

This project coordinated the efforts of the city of Atlanta's Housing Department, the National Painters Union, and Sherwin Williams Paint Company to recruit and train volunteers to paint 250 houses for low-income residents in the Zone. Some homeless individuals and some residents of public housing were trained as professional painters and will become members of the local Painters Union. The second phase of the project is under negotiation. A total of \$2.5 million was leveraged from the private sector for the project.

The Asbestos/Lead Abatement project provides asbestos/lead paint/radon training to residents of the Atlanta Zone. As of March 1997, 13 residents have completed the training and through a partnership with a local developer, 100 percent of the trainees have secured permanent employment. The Project includes \$125,000 in Title XX funds.

For more information on house painting, contact Joseph Reed, Mayor's Office, at 404-853-7372, and for more information on lead abatement, contact Mickey Feltus at 404-331-4480.

EZ Residents Save \$88,000 Through Water Conservation Project

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

Through a private/public partnership including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the city of Atlanta, and several private firms, approximately 1,000 ultra-low-flush toilets and low-flow showerheads were distributed free of charge to EZ residents. Volunteers from the AmeriCorps program and from the Summerhill, Reynoldstown, and Betmar LaVilla neighborhoods assisted in the distribution and installation of the water-saving devices. A memorandum from Paul White, executive director of the EZ, suggests potential savings of 25 million gallons of water and \$88,000 in water bill savings. Participating EZ households can expect to save \$120 each year. H.J. Russell Company, Monogram Credit Card Bank, CTSI Corporation, Bell South, and Atlanta Renaissance Hotel are among the sponsors that raised \$135,000 in funding and in-kind services.

For more information, contact Paul White, Atlanta EZ Corporation, at 404-331-4480.

15 Health Workers Hired Under Community-Based Asthma Prevention Model Project

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

This program is designed to reduce the number of childhood premature asthma attacks by hiring 15 health workers to assist families in making the necessary indoor environmental changes to reduce the severity of asthma in children. The project also offers the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation the opportunity to develop a community-based model that supports corporate funding of public health issues and involves community participants in discussion and decisionmaking. The program involves the Morehouse School of Medicine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Southwest Hospital, Fulton County, Grady Hospital, Rollins School of Public Health (Emory University), Prudential Health Plans, Kaiser Permanente, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Funding for this project includes \$2 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and \$3 million from private sources, including health maintenance organizations.

For more information on asthma prevention, contact Paul White, Atlanta EZ, at 404-331-4480.

Recycling Business Creates 265 Jobs

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

Renewal Atlanta, a Boston-based glass and paper recycling company, and Peter Rhodes, Inc., a local generator manufacturer, are locating plants at the long-vacant Brown Trucking Company site to take advantage of tax incentives offered under the Empowerment Zone effort and the new Capitol View Industrial Enterprise Zone. Four other companies—Cumming South, a diesel engine repair firm; Southern Freight, a trucking company; Atlanta Film, a manufacturer of tamper-proof bags for food products; and Triple S Pharmaceutical, a pharmaceutical equipment manufacturer—have also decided to remain in the city, attracted by EZ tax incentives and employment tax credits. EZ residents make up as much as 45 percent of the employees of the four companies.

Renewal Atlanta is a new recycling business established on a former industrial site. The newly purchased facility will create up to 65 full-time jobs for EZ residents and 200 temporary jobs for youth. Renewal Atlanta, in conjunction with other local businesses, will offer EZ youth 2-year internships in various recycling enterprises. Interns will each earn stipends of \$4,000 for every year of participation. More than \$3.5 million in private financing is committed to this initiative.

For more information on Renewal Atlanta, contact Paul White, Atlanta EZ Corporation, at 404-331-4480.

Atlanta EZ Establishes \$30 Million Community and Individual Investment Corporation

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

The Atlanta Empowerment Zone is establishing a Community and Individual Investment Corporation (CIIC) in which residents own shares in the investments made in their communities. Initial capitalization of approximately \$30 million will increase the availability of development credit and encourage capital formation and savings among area residents. As shareholders, residents have a personal economic stake in the investments made in their community, increasing local participation and stimulating local support for businesses.

Of the \$35 million total initial capitalization, it is proposed that as much as \$5 million of Title XX funds be allocated to start the CIIC. In addition, \$5 million would be allocated to the CIIC from existing city assets and \$5 million will come from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Economic Development Initiative funds. A Section 108 loan guarantee of \$10 million is planned. Approximately \$20 million could be leveraged against this public investment through the sale of notes and bonds. NationsBank, SunTrust, Mutual Federal, and other local institutions have also expressed interest in exploring possible lending and investment relationships with the CIIC.

For more information about Atlanta CIIC, contact Paul White, Atlanta EZ Corporation, at 404-331-4480.

Technology Challenge Project Creates Multimedia Electronic Educational Network

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

The Atlanta Public Schools propose to create a multimedia electronic educational network (interactive for grades K through 12) to link school, home, and community. This network will provide easy access to the administrative and instructional staffs of the local schools and administrative personnel as well as provide access to local, national, and global resources. Funding includes \$9,000 from the U.S. Department of Education and at least \$27,000 from private sources. At one Zone middle school, almost \$2 million in services and equipment have been donated. The mayor and the school superintendent recently accepted a national award for the effort at this school, which included a \$10,000 payment to continue technology efforts.

For more information, contact Paul White, Atlanta EZ Corporation, at 404-331-4480.

Council of Foundations Receptions Encourage Collaboration

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

The Empowerment Zone Corporation (EZC) hosted a reception for members of the Council of Foundations. Information packages were provided to members to develop an interest in EZ initiatives. This activity was designed to foster better relationships between the EZC and various foundations whose focus is providing services to youth and families. The development of this collaboration is intended to utilize those private resources to leverage Empowerment Zone dollars to enhance or expand programs. No SSBG funds are involved. Participating agents are the Community Empowerment Advisory Board, NationsBank, and Georgia Power.

For more information about Atlanta partnerships, contact Paul White, Atlanta EZ Corporation, at 404-331-4480.

Homeless Families Become Homeowners

Atlanta, Georgia, EZ

“This is the best closing of my career!” exclaims Atlanta banker Lori Livesay. Her enthusiasm is inspired by the remarkable story of Calvin Robertson, his wife, and their two children; all overcame mental impairments to move from homelessness and assisted housing to homeownership with the help of Livesay and the Atlanta Center for Homeownership.

Livesay first met Robertson at the Center’s 8-hour First-Time Homebuyer Workshop. After receiving followup counseling and downpayment assistance from the State of Georgia, the Robertsons were able to close on their newly rehabilitated home with a mortgage provided by Chase Manhattan Mortgage Corporation.

The Atlanta Center for Homeownership is a joint project of the Atlanta Empowerment Zone Corporation and the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA). At the 10,000-square-foot center, which includes training, consultation, and meeting rooms, clients work with certified housing counselors to develop personalized action plans for homeownership. Center staff work with local lenders to ensure that clients understand the loan approval process and meet underwriting standards. Comprehensive post-purchase counseling is also provided.

Clients purchasing a home within the EZ are eligible for an \$8,000 mortgage assistance grant. Strong partnerships with the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, Fannie Mae, and local lenders allow the Center to access additional loan products for its low- and moderate-income clients. It is also partnering with SouthTrust Bank to establish checking accounts for clients who have been denied checking elsewhere. Consumer Credit Counseling Service opened a branch at the Center to provide credit counseling at no charge.

“This is not going to be a kind of social service agency,” explains E. Mike Proctor, Deputy Executive Director for special housing and homeownership of AHA. “What we’re trying to do is reshape the buying process for low-income residents.”

In its first 10 months, the Center assisted several public housing residents in moving to homeownership, facilitated more than \$12 million in home sales, and provided counseling assistance and training to more than 2,000 clients, resulting in the prevention of more than 75 foreclosures.

For more information, contact Jeanne G. Gura, Director, Atlanta Center for Homeownership, at 404–588–3701.